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SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO S/CT, R, S/SRMC, PA, EUR/PGI, EUR/CE, EAP/MTS
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SUBJECT: EMBASSY PRODUCING COUNTER RADICALIZATION VIDEO

REF: A. BERLIN 1172

[B](#). BERLIN 862

[C](#). STATE 19846

[D](#). 2008 STATE 72112

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs Robert A. Pollard for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (SBU) SUMMARY: Embassy Berlin is producing a counter radicalization video that highlights messages from Germany-based Muslim community leaders who reject extremism and promote tolerance and understanding among religions. Mission Germany recently organized ten days of filming by a U.S.-Indonesian film crew that criss-crossed the country interviewing over a dozen Germany-based Imams, theologians, government representatives, Muslim community leaders and academics. The interview subjects are willing to take public stands against extremist ideologies and were selected on the basis of their leadership positions in their communities and/or expertise in their fields. Once post-production is completed, Embassy Berlin and the five consulates will partner with the interview subjects and our Muslim engagement network of government and civil society representatives to distribute the DVD for use in Mosques, schools and community centers. This project, which is supported by a S/CT Ambassador's Fund for Counterterrorism grant, presents a reproducible model for Embassy - DoD partnership with civil society to counter violent extremism. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (SBU) This cable describes the status of Embassy Berlin's implementation of the \$50,000 grant awarded to the Economics/Global Affairs section under the S/CT Ambassador's Fund for Counterterrorism program (reftels C and D). Our

program is developing a network of influential Germany-based Muslim civil society leaders who are willing to take public stands against Islamist ideology and to reject violent extremism. The project is creating partnerships among mainstream Muslims within Germany as well as links with like-minded Muslims outside Germany in order to share experiences and support one another in challenging extremism.

The program is also developing a number of counter radicalization tools, including books, teaching materials and a DVD video curriculum that promotes tolerance between cultures and religions and rejects extremist interpretations of the Koran.

Project Partners: LibForAll and EUCOM IO

13. (SBU) Embassy Berlin has partnered with the U.S.-Indonesian LibForAll Foundation (Liberty for All, www.libforall.org). LibForAll is a nonprofit civil society organization formed in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks to develop global counter-extremist networks. LibForAll has worked extensively in Indonesia to mobilize prominent Muslim leaders in the fields of religion, education, pop culture, government, business and media to reject extremism and promote tolerance. LibForAll was co-founded by American C. Holland Taylor and former Indonesian President Wahid who is the long-time head of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Muslim organization,

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with nearly 40 million members. LibForAll is headquartered in North Carolina, and has offices in Indonesia and The Netherlands. LibForAll's advisors include prominent Muslim theologians, Imams and government officials in Indonesia, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Embassy Berlin's Ambassador's Fund project mobilizes LibForAll's international network to engage with German counterparts and jointly create counter radicalization tools that promote understanding among religions and challenge extremists' pretense to speak for all Muslims.

14. (C) Embassy Berlin has also developed a partnership with United States European Command (EUCOM), based in Stuttgart, to assist with a variety of technical issues related to the counter radicalization tools developed by the program. Since Germany's Muslim community is diverse and multi-ethnic, the project requires significant amounts of translation across multiple languages. EUCOM's Information Operations (EUCOM J39) office is contributing in-kind DoD translation services so that the publications and video series are available in German, Turkish, Arabic, and English. We are also working towards EUCOM providing assistance to insert multiple language subtitling onto the DVDs. Given the program's modest budget, EUCOM's translation and technical assistance contributions are essential.

VIDEO SCRIPT - "RELIGION AND STATE"

15. (SBU) The video program produced in Germany will become the seventh episode of a larger DVD curriculum series developed independently by LibForAll. LibForAll filmed the six earlier episodes mostly in Indonesia, but also Egypt. The initial six episodes are complete and each episode focuses on a particular topic. The topics include "Islam and Faith," "Ummah/Faith Communities," and controversial and often misunderstood terms such as "Jihad". The six episodes feature prominent Muslim scholars, community leaders and Imams providing instruction and tolerant interpretations of these issues.

¶6. (SBU) The title for the program filmed in Germany is "Religion and State." The episode addresses the relationship between government and religion and puts particular emphasis on Muslim experiences in Germany, making clear that although integration has not always proceeded smoothly, the vast majority of Germany's Muslim population is working within established frameworks to improve their social circumstances. In detail, the script has three segments that speakers are asked to comment on:

Segment 1: In the first segment of the program, religion's historical role (not simply that of Islam) in society of providing guidance to improve the character and behavior of humans is presented. However, throughout history some groups and leaders have sought to subvert the spiritual function of religion and exploit it for political purposes. Examples are presented of nations that have rejected religion altogether (e.g., some communist/socialist regimes) as well as states

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where religion and government are inseparable (e.g., Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan under the Taliban).

Segment 2: In this segment, speakers stress that Islam provides no final directives concerning the relationship between religion and state or any particular theory of government. They note that Islam does not mandate the mechanics of states (i.e., form of government and/or leadership structures), but rather that Islam, like all religions, strives to elevate social interactions to a higher moral and spiritual level by improving the character of humanity.

Segment 3: Modern Germany's constitutional separation of religion and state is presented positively as a system in which residents are free to practice the faith of their choosing. The Muslim program participants speak directly about the benefits of living in secular Germany and compare it favorably to life in some Islamic states that offer fewer personal freedom and professional opportunities. The Muslim speakers also deliver clear messages rejecting extremism, intolerant interpretations of Islam, and terrorism.

Developing a Counter Radicalization Network

¶7. (SBU) The six-person LibForAll film crew interviewed thirteen individuals during the period September 3 to 13. Mission Germany staff selected some of the interview subjects from our Muslim engagement contact lists, arranged the interviews, and attended many of the interview filming sessions. Participants were selected based on their demonstrated record of promoting progressive and inclusive interpretations of Islam and for their influence within their communities. Other, non-Muslim participants, were new to the Mission and were chosen for their expertise. The Open Source Center also provided lists of potential project partners. Footage of churches, synagogues, historical landmarks, city and landscapes across the country were obtained to provide context. The following individuals were interviewed (the location of the interview and language spoken are indicated):

Dr. Rauf Ceylan (Duisberg, German), Chairman of the Center for Intercultural Competence (ZfIK). The ZfIK's work includes organizing seminars and workshops for governments, businesses and the media on migration, integration and Islam.

Wael El-Gayar (Dusseldorf, English), North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Generations, Family, Women and Integration. El-Gayar is an Advisor on Islam in the Ministry's Office for

Strategy, Immigration and Integration.

Haluk Yildiz (Bonn, English), Bonn City Council Member and founder of new Muslim political party "Alliance for Peace and Fairness."

Winfried Hassemer (Frankfurt, German), Former Vice President of the Federal Constitutional Court.

Imam Bajrambejamin Idriz (Penzberg, Arabic), Imam of the

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Islamic Community of Penzberg mosque.

Ozlem Nas (Hamburg, German), Instructor, Islamic Science and Education Institute, Representative of Hamburg Integration Council, and Member of Schura Council of Islamic Associations in Hamburg.

Ramazan Ucar (Hamburg, Arabic), Imam of Hamburg Central Mosque, Chair of the Alliance of Islamic Associations in Northern Germany.

Dr. Schirin Amir-Moazami (Berlin, German), a Professor of Islamic Studies at the Free University Berlin.

Andreas Nachama (Berlin, German), Rabbi and Director of the Topography of Terror Foundation (a research center focused on Nazi crimes), former Chairman of the Board of the Jewish Association in Berlin and former board member of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Sarmad Hussain (Berlin, English), Secretary General of the German-Pakistan Forum, German Bundestag Advisor.

Dr. Michael Bongardt (Burg Rothenfels, German), Director of Institute for Comparative Ethics, Free University Berlin. Professor Bongardt is a former priest and Catholic theologian.

Dr. Bassam Tibi (Berlin, German), German-Syrian Political Scientist, Professor at Gottingen University, Cornell University and Research Fellow at Yale University. Co-founder of the Arabic Organization for Human Rights and Cordoba Trilateral dialogue between Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

Hans Kueng (Tubingen, German), Theologian, Catholic Priest and Author.

Project Implementation

18. (U) Over twenty hours of interview and location footage was obtained during the film crew's September visit. We are now in the post-production phase and LibForAll is editing the material down to an approximately one hour program and will add multiple subtitle tracks.

19. (SBU) Following the interviews, most program participants expressed an interest in assisting in the DVD distribution and introducing it to local audiences. Ceylan, Idriz, Nas, and Ucar indicated a willingness to introduce the program into mosques and Muslim-oriented community associations. El-Gayar is examining how his ministry could assist in distributing the program to schools. The Embassy and the five Consulates General plan to consult program participants and discuss ways we could partner in distributing the DVD. Mission Germany is considering hosting screenings and providing the program to our broader list of Muslim engagement contacts. We are considering approaching television broadcasters and media outlets.

Creating Partnerships: Embassy - EUCOM - Civil Society

¶10. (C) Islamic extremists are currently targeting Germany with Internet messaging at unprecedented levels and authorities judge the threat of radicalization and home-grown terrorism as reaching new highs (refs A and B). German extremists belonging to the Islamic Jihad Union and Al-Qaeda who are based in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region continue to produce a stream of German-language audio and video messages seeking to motivate supporters in Germany to carry out terrorist attacks. Mission Germany's project aims to empower voices within Germany's Muslim community who have the credibility and influence to take public stands against the extremist messaging. We believe that in the hands of the interview participants and their civil society organizations the DVD will become an effective counter radicalization tool that can reach vulnerable populations that the Embassy and Consulates might not otherwise have access to. Additionally, obtaining the assistance of authorities responsible for education and integration will further magnify the reach of our program.

¶11. (C) Mission Germany's counter radicalization partnership with EUCOM and LibForAll seeks to complement each organization's strengths. Mission Germany manages the project and selects vetted program participants from across German society. LibForAll provides access to their network of Islamic scholarship and influential Muslim figures who are committed to promoting progressive and tolerant interpretations of the Koran. EUCOM contributes its extensive technical expertise and resource capabilities. EUCOM's experience in managing Internet news sites raises the prospect of creating an Internet platform for the program material.
Murphy